

the celestial moevinges of sterres, or elles by the vertu of angeles, or elles by the diverse subtilitee of develes, or elles by any of hem, or elles by hem alle, the destinal ordinaunce is ywoven and acomplished. Certes, it is open thing, that the purviaunce is an unmoevable and simple forme of thinges to done; & the moevable bond and the temporel ordinaunce of thinges, whiche that the divyne simplicittee of purviaunce hath ordeyned to done, that is destinee. for which it is, that alle thinges that ben put under destinee ben, certes, subgits to purviaunce, to whiche purviaunce destinee itself is subgit and under. But some thinges ben put under purviaunce, that surmounten the ordinaunce of destinee; and tho ben thilke that stably ben yfiched negh to the firste godhed: they surmounten the ordre of destinal moevabletee. for right as of cerles that tornen aboute a same centre or aboute a poynt, thilke cerle that is innerest or most withinne joyneth to the simplesse of the middel, and is, as it were, a centre or a poynt to that other cerles that tornen abouten him; and thilke that is outterest, compassed by larger envyrninge, is unfolded by larger spaces, in so moche as it is forthest fro the middel simplicittee of the poynt; and yif ther be anything that knitteth and felawshipeth himself to thilke middel poynt, it is constrained into simplicittee, that is to seyn, into unmoevabletee, & it cese to be shad & to fleten dyversely: right so, by semblable resoun, thilke thing that departeth forthest fro the first thought of God, it is unfolded & summitted to gretter bondes of destinee: and in so moche is the thing more free and laus fro destinee, as it axeth and holdeth him ner to thilke centre of thinges, that is to seyn, God. And yif the thing clyveth to the stedefastnesse of the thought of God, and be withoute moevinge, certes, it sormounteth the necessitee of destinee. Channe right swich comparisoun as it is of skilinge to understondinge, & of thing that is engendred to thing that is, and of tyme to eternitee, and of the cerle to the centre, right so is the ordre of moevable destinee to the stable simplicittee of purviaunce.

LIKE ordinaunce moeveth the hevene and the sterres, and atempreth the elements togider amonges hemself, and transformeth hem by entrechangeable mutacioun; and thilke same ordre neweth ayein alle thinges growinge and fallinge adoun, by semblable progressiouns of sedes & of sexes, that is to seyn, male and femele. And this ilke ordre constraineth the fortunes & the dedes of men by a bond of causes, nat able to ben un-

bounde; the whiche destinal causes, whan they passen out fro the biginninges of the unmoevable purviaunce, it mot nedes be that they ne be nat mutable. And thus ben the thinges ful wel ygoverned, yif that the simplicittee dwellinge in the divyne thought sheweth forth the ordre of causes, unable to ben ybowed; and this ordre constraineth by his propre stabletee the moevable thinges, or elles they sholden fleten folli, for which it is, that alle thinges semen to ben confus and trouble to us men, for we natheles, the propre maner of every thinge, dressinge hem to goode, dispoeneth hem alle.

FOR ther nis nothing don for cause of yvel; ne thilke thing that is don by wikkede folk nis nat don for yvel. The whiche shrewes, as I have shewed plentifulously, saken good, but wikked ful rourmismorneth hem, ne the ordre cominge fro the poynt of goverein good ne declineth nat fro his biginninge. But thou mayst seyn, what unreste may ben a worse confusoun than that gode men han somtyme adversitee and somtyme prosperitee, and shrewes also now han thinges that they desiren, and now thinges that they haten? Whether men liven now in swich hoolnesse of thought, (as who seyth, ben men now so wyse), that swiche folk as they demen to ben gode folk or shrewes, that it most nedes ben that folk ben swiche as they wenen? But in this manere the domes of men discorden, that thilke men that some folk demen worthy of mede, other folk demen hem worthy of torment. But lat us graunte, I pose that som man may wel demen or knowen the gode folk and the badde; may he thanne knowen & seen thilke innereste atempraunce of corages, as it hath ben wont to be seyde of bodies; as who seyth, may a man speken & determinen of atempraunces in corages, as men were wont to demen or speken of complexiouns and atempraunces of bodies? Ne it ne is nat an unlyk miracle, to hem that ne knowen it nat, (as who seith, but it is lyke a merveil or a miracle to hem that ne knowen it nat), why that swete thinges ben covenable to some bodies that ben hole, and to some bodies bittere thinges ben covenable; and also, why that some syke folk ben holpen with lighte medicynes, & some folk ben holpen with sharpe medicynes. But natheles, the leche that knoweth the manere and the atempraunce of hele & of maladye, ne merveilith of it nothing. But what other thing semeth hele of corages but bountee and prowessse? And what other thing semeth maladye of corages but vyces? Who is elles kepere of good or dryver away of yvel, but

God, governour and lecher of thoughtes? The whiche God, whan he hath biholden from the heye tour of his purveaunce, he knoweth what is covenable to every wight, and leneth hem that he wot that is covenable to hem. I.o., herof comth and herof is don this noble miracle of the ordre destinal, whan God, that al knoweth, doth swiche thing, of which thing that unknowinge folk ben astoned. But for to constreine, as who seyth, but for to comprehende & telle a fewe thinges of the divyne deepnesse, the whiche that mannes resoun may understonde, thilkeman that thou weneest to ben right juste and right kepinge of equitee, the contrarie of that semeth to the divyne purveaunce, that al wot. And Lucan, my familer, telleth that The victorious cause lykede to the goddes, and the cause overcomen lykede to Catoun. Channe, what-sover thou mayst seen that is don in this world unhoped or unwened, certes, it is the right orde of thinges; but, as to thy wikkede opinioun, it is a confusoun. But I suppose that som man be so wel ythewed, that the divyne jugement & the jugement of mankinde acorden hem togider of him; but he is so unstedefast of corage, that, yif any adversitee come to him, he wol foreteten, paraventure, to continue innocence, by the whiche he ne may nat withholden fortune. Channe the wyse dispensacioun of God spareth him, the whiche man adversitee mighte enpeyren; for that God wol nat suffren him to travaile, to whom that travaille nis nat covenable. Another man is parfit in alle vertues, and is an holy man, & negh to God, so that the purveaunce of God wolde demen, that it were a felonye that he were touched with any adversitees; so that he wol nat suffre that swich a man be moeved with any bodily maladye. But so as seyde a philosopre, the more excellent by me: he seyde in Grek, that Vertues han edified the body of the holy man. And ofte tyme it bitydeth, that the somme of thinges that ben to done is taken to governe to gode folk, for that the malice haboundaunt of shrewes sholde ben abated. And God yeveth & departeth to othere folk prosperitees and adversitees ymedled tohepe, after the qualitee of hir corages, and remordeth som folk by adversitee, for they ne sholde nat wexen proude by longe welefunesse. And other folk he suffreth to ben travailed with harde thinges, for that they sholden confermen the vertues of corage by the usage and exercitacioun of patience. And other folk dreden more than they oughten that whiche they mighten wel beren; and somme dispysse that they mowe nat beren; & thilke folk God ledeth into experience of himself by aspre and

sorwful thinges. And many othere folk han bought honourable renoun of this world by the prys of glorious deeth. And som men, that ne mowen nat ben overcomen by torments, have yeven ensaumple to othere folk, that vertu may nat ben overcomen by adversitees; and of alle thinges ther nis no doute, that they ne ben don rightfully and ordenely, to the profit of hem to whom we seen thise thinges bityde. for certes, that adversitee comth somtyme to shrewes, & somtyme that that they desiren, it comth of thise forseide causes. And of sorwful thinges that bityden to shrewes, certes, no man ne wondreth; for alle men wenen that they han wel deserved it, and that they ben of wikkede merite; of whiche shrewes the torment somtyme agasteth othere to don felonies, and somtyme it amendeth hem that suffren the torments. And the prosperitee that is yeven to shrewes sheweth a greet argument to gode folk, what thing they sholde demen of thilke welefunesse, the whiche prosperitee men seen ofte serven to shrewes. In the which thing I trowe that God dispenseth; for paraventure, the nature of som man is so overthrowinge to yvel, and so uncovenable, that the nedy povertie of his houshold mighte rather egren him to don felonies. And to the maladye of him God putteth remedie, to yeven him richesces. And som other man biholdeth his conscience defouled with sinnes, and maketh comparisoun of his fortune and of himself; and dredeth, paraventure, that his blisfunesse, of which the usage is joyeful to him, that the lesinge of thilke blisfunesse ne be nat sorwful to him; and therfor he wol chaunge his maneres, and, for he dredeth to lese his fortune, he foreteth his wikkednesse. To othere folk is welefunesse yeven unworthily, the whiche overthroweth hem into distruccioun that they han deserved. And to som othere folk is yeven power to punishen, for that it shal be cause of continuacioun and exercysinge to gode folk and cause of torment to shrewes. for so as ther nis non alyaunce bytwixe gode folk and shrewes, ne shrewes ne mowen nat acorden amonges hemself. And why nat? for shrewes discorden of hemself by hir vyces, the whiche vyces al torenden hir consciences; & don ofte tyme thinges, the whiche thinges, whan they han don hem, they demen that tho thinges ne sholden nat han ben don. for which thing thilke goverein purveaunce hath maked ofte tyme fair miracle; so that shrewes han maked shrewes to ben gode men. for whan that som shrewes seen that they suffren wrongfully felonies of othere shrewes, they wexen eschaufed into hate of hem that anoye-